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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4907
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 8608
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 5199
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 4783
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 000843

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT
STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [MOPS](#)
SUBJECT: COORDINATION FAILURE RESULTS IN
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN FORCES EXCHANGE OF FIRE

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Greg Marchese for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (S) SUMMARY. Palestinian sources state, that in the early morning hours of May 21, two Palestinian General Intelligence (GI) officers, in the course of an Israeli-approved operation against Hamas in the West Bank city of Qalqiliya, exchanged fire with an undercover Israel Defense Forces (IDF) unit. According to Palestinian security sources, the IDF unit apparently was not briefed on the Palestinian operation, resulting in confusion and a subsequent firefight. According to media reports, the IDF and PA have agreed to further investigate the incident. One Palestinian remains hospitalized, whose care Israeli authorities have offered to pay for. END SUMMARY.

POOR COORDINATION, EXCHANGE OF FIRE

12. (S) According to Palestinian security contacts, at approximately 01:30 on May 21, a Volvo van with Palestinian tags was stopped by a Palestinian patrol on Al Wadi road near Hableh junction in Qalqiliya city. The Volvo's occupants were plainclothes IDF officers, who showed their IDs and were allowed to continue. The Palestinian patrol then alerted surrounding units about the presence of the IDF unit.

13. (S) According to Mahmud Hamad, Director of the Palestinian General Intelligence (GI) office in Qalqiliya, a GI operation was also underway at the time to search a Hamas residence in an Area C section of Qalqiliya city. Hamad said that he had coordinated the GI operation three days prior with the Israeli District Coordination Office, and had Israeli approval to proceed.

14. (S) The Palestinian GI unit noticed the Volvo van near the Hamas residence they were searching. According to Hamad, GI officers approached the vehicle and asked the occupants to identify themselves. The Volvo reportedly sped away and the GI officers pursued. According to Hamad, GI warning shots fired a shot into the air resulted in a return of fire from the IDF unit, and a brief firefight ensued.

15. (S) Media reports claim two IDF officers were lightly injured and one Palestinian officer was hospitalized. The IDF has reportedly offered the PA to jointly investigate the incident. Mahmud Hamad said the Israelis apologized for the incident and offered to provide medical care for the wounded officer.

REACTIONS

¶6. (C) National Security Forces commander MG Thiab Ali (Abu Fatah) told PolSpec that it was a "miracle" that there had not been a larger firefight and more casualties. Abu Fatah said this type of poor coordination is an ongoing problem. He said both the Joint Patrol and the GI, seeing a Palestinian-plated vehicle after dark in Area C near an operation targetting a Hamas residence, profiled the van as likely Hamas.

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